the paintings recently completed, one must fear that the exterior dampness will cause a more rapid destruction."

The frescoes themselves, the writer thinks, have undoubted merit; they agree with the structure which contains them.

Executed in a plain tone, they harmonise well together, with the exception of some blues, which are rather too bright. In such a work the artist has hardly fair play:—"He was not free to inscribe on those walls his independent fancy;—a figure graceful and young, by the side of a form stiff and gothic; a conception of our time by the side of the traditions of the middle age. He has also sacrificed in his works form to symbolism: and this sacrifice has been in some parts carried very far, as in the tympanum, representing Christ on the cross. The Eternal Father holding between his knees, and sustaining with his extended arms the instrument of punishment, forms, with the body of the victim, an ugly and ungraceful whole. Further, if the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son, are here only as symbols, it is perhaps wrong to have given to the two angels, at the right and left of the Eternal, too animated gestures of human affliction. The skies of gold, on which are cut the lines of the horizon; the discs of gold, on which the heads are inlaid; the want of æthereal perspective; the sacrifice of geometrical perspective; all in this great composition shew the shackles of conventional art. And is it not a hard necessity that condemns the artist to suppress inspiration, to sudden form and colour, to stifle life and sentiment, for the gain of a useless concordance with an old form, once a lively work of the faith, now a dead letter, and not understood by the crowd? Nevertheless, whatever we may say of the system, let us do justice to the persevering courage, the long and difficult researches, of the artist, who, during four seasons, has devoted himself to this great work, has lived as a man of the middle ages, and has brought to completion, with a great character of unity, this immense monumental decoration."

VICTORIA PARK AND THE "WOODS AND FORESTS."

SIR JOHN CASS'S CHARITY LANDS.

CORRESPONDENTS have drawn our attention to the eastern Park, complaining of the tardy pace at which the Commissioners of Woods and Forests have proceeded in all the arrangements relating to this improvement. The Act for its formation was obtained some years ago, and it is only *now* partially laid out and planted. The respectable community on the eastern side of the metropolis have really ground for complaint in this hope long deferred. *When* completed, it is said, that, in some respects, it will outvie Regent's or Hyde Park. A lake, six acres in area, with a fountain to throw fifty feet high, is promised; and the size and costliness of the lodge and bridge (near where old Bonner's Hall stood) bears out the assertion. The lodge, designed by Mr. Pennythorne, may be called Elizabethan in character, and is built of red brick with stone dressings. It is lofty, and has a tower, the lower part of which is open on three sides to form a porch. At the time of the formation of this park, there was much discussion as to the site. The landowners of Stepney, Limehouse, and its vicinity, urged on the Commissioners that the south side of the Mile-end-road would form a more desirable position for a public park; but it seems clear that the site chosen was really better for the public weal,—the districts of Bow, Stratford, Hackney, Dalston, Clapton, Kingsland, and Stoke Newington, will all, more or less, derive benefit, when the park is finished and the approaches made; and the projected line of road from Limehouse will open a suitable avenue from that quarter. The Commissioners of Woods have given notice of application to Parliament in the ensuing session, with reference to this approach, and also for powers to form an approach from Cambridge-heath gate, and another from Bethnal-green-road. Surely, this was a *faux pas* on the part of the authorities to omit provision for the approaches till now; another two or three years will be absorbed, which might have been saved if the approaches had at least been formed simultaneously with the park. Where is Victoria Park? is not at all an unfrequent question, even within a hundred yards of the gate, so obscured and hidden is it in its position; the block of houses on the eastern side of Bethnal-green-road, and thence northward to Cambridge-heath, form a perfect *curtain* to the park from the London side. It might seem hypercritical to carry these remarks further, but really it is too true; at the present moment, there is not one direct and accessible road by which a visitor could drive to the park. No person standing at the Cambridge-heath gate could imagine that he was within two minutes' walk of the park, and might see the lodge if he knew where to look for it. Surely, as a mere piece of worldly policy, this is unwise.

The land in Victoria-park will *not let* for building purposes until the public know and can see the way to it. It was the natural hope of all who were interested in the improvement of the eastern side of the metropolis, that the park would excite to a better class of buildings than had been formerly erected. In this respect some few have honourably emulated, and have gone forward with energy to the work. There is an important charity estate, known as Sir John Cass's Charity, lying north of the park, and forming the entire northern boundary; and the trustees of this property seem resolved to do their part for the improvement of the neighbourhood. They have swept away a wretched village of houses (or hovels, more properly), formerly known as Botany Bay; and this peculiar cognomen arose out of the circumstance of so many of its inhabitants being sent to the *real place*, not for their good deeds, it may well be believed.*

The estate of Sir J. Cass's Charity bids fair to become a most important one in this district; and when the contemplated approach is made from Cambridge-heath to Gun-street, and the other roads in course of formation are carried out, it cannot fail to become popular as building property: new roads and sewers are being formed. The Governors of St. Thomas's Hospital have also an estate at the north-west corner of the park; but they do not seem yet to be in the field for building purposes. It is satisfactory to find, that large owners of property are making a resolute effort to improve the eastern side of the metropolis. There is much to be done in the neighbourhood of Hackney, as any one who has had occasion to travel in a vehicle, in any direction but the one main line to London (and that is any thing but a direct one) will verify.

If those who are interested would unite and obtain a local Act, they might at comparatively small cost improve their own property and benefit the public greatly. An immense number of small houses have been built in Hackney and Homerton within a few years, and unless some general plan for improvement be determined on quickly, it may be too late. In the neighbourhood of the park an enormous church (St. John of Jerusalem) is being erected, under Mr. Hakewill, which promises well. It is a cross church, early English in style, and has a most capacious chancel. The roofs are now being put on.

* Sir John Cass was a worthy alderman of London, who died in 1718. His father, Thomas Cass, was carpenter to the Royal Ordnance, and acquired a large fortune, which descended to Sir John. The latter built two schools near the church of St. Botolph, Aldgate (opened 1710), besides some other buildings contiguous to these; and provided salaries for the master and mistress. He willed, that after the death of his wife the whole of his estate should be held by certain trustees, to provide the charity-children of his schools with a dinner every day, and for other purposes; but died with the pen in his hand without fully completing the instrument; which led to much litigation and difficulty, not settled till thirty years after Cass's death. The estate is managed by twenty-one trustees. Sir James Flower is the treasurer. It is proposed to build schools at Hackney in a short time.

THE NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,

AND THE PROGRESSIVE RISE OF THE RIVER.

I have noticed, for nearly half a century, the gradual and regular rise of the waters of the river Thames. My attention was first drawn to it by finding that extreme high tides were not preceded, nor succeeded by, similar tides.

These were recorded by the watermen of the Westminster Horseferry, by notches cut by them on a post there, ere the post was removed when the street was raised.

This subject led me to conjecture as to the origin of the Marsh Walls.

I now observe, that professional men in reporting on some localities, such as Westminster, say that the sewers there were originally too low. But it appears from what I shall relate, that the said sewers were high enough when they were first made; but are not so now, owing to the rise of the river.

It appears that I am the first person who has noticed a circumstance so universally continuously evident. The architects of modern, as well as ancient buildings, were not aware of it, as will be too plainly seen by referring to the floor of Westminster Hall, the upper line of the starlings of old London-bridge, the gate of Lambeth Palace, the York Water-gate, Adelphi, the level of the wharfs there, &c.

A paper by me, going more fully into the subject, was printed in the *Morning Herald* of April 4th, 1843.

In 1844, the Commissioners for improving the metropolis published their first report, comprising the evidence as to the proposed embankment of the Thames, by Mr. Walker, Mr. Page, Mr. Cubitt, and other scientific men, *up to August*, 1843, with numerous plans, sections, &c. of the river.

Not one of these gentlemen alluded to the rise of the river; but, on the contrary, they all refer to a *fixed standard level of high water, called Trinity datum* (made, it appears, in 1800). And in referring to the Marsh Walls, they attribute the formation of them to the Romans, *vide* pages 66, 212, 230.

My theory has hitherto been met at every step by contradiction, although it is supported by the science of physical geography, combined with geology.

It appears that the ground line or plinth of the palatial Houses of Parliament is already below the level of extreme high tides. The difference of the rise of the highest tide before the Parliament Houses were burnt down, to the last highest tide, viz. in December, 1845, is but ten inches. The preceding highest tide was in October, 1841. These two tides were very carefully noticed at the "Fox under the Hill," Adelphi, the people there being up at the late hours both these tides occurred at; the difference was exactly one inch; the lines of elevation are painted in the tap-room there.

The gate-towers of Lambeth Palace were built by Cardinal Morton, about 1490. It is evident, by the height of the door-way there, that the ground was elevated two feet, when the hall was rebuilt at the restoration; the last highest tide was 18 inches above the line of the said present raised ground or road.

There is a house in Upper Fore-street, Lambeth, with large chesnut beams and uprights; this appears of about the time of King Edward the First; the first floor is now only 3 feet 1 inch above the street, which is close to the river; therefore, when this house was built, the lowest marsh, viz. that opposite to Greenwich, was above the level of the highest tide, and might then be entitled to its name of "The *Isle* of Dogs."

The said ancient house in Fore-street is now in a most neglected and decayed state. There is a tradition there that it was part of a bishop's house, and had steps in front, with trees before it. I cannot find any account of it in topographical works, but Mr. Green, the proprietor, says it adjoined the remains of a larger building of similar materials.

The River Locks.—In 1803 there was no lock between London and Windsor. The locks since made must in a slight degree increase the height of some tides at London.

The Old London-bridge was taken down before the commencement of the palatial Houses of Parliament. The removal of the old bridge has very much altered the *ebbs*, but can only to a slight degree affect the height of the flood tides, because there was no fall when the tide was running up, but only a strong current. The fall was greatest about half an hour before low water (above the bridge), when it has been as much as five or six feet,—then keeping the water above the bridge, at that time of so much superior elevation—of course, the higher portion of water kept running down, until the water below bridge rose to a common level.

T. HOOG.

FALL OF A WALL.—A wall 10 feet high, at Blackwall Point, was thrown down last week, by piling sand against it, and a person who was passing at the moment was killed.

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